

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4266
INFO AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 3083

KINGSTON PASS TO ADVANCE PARTY

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OVIP, EC
SUBJECT: PLANNING FOR MRS. CARTER'S VISIT: ANALYSIS OF MEDIA

REF: STATE 104923

1. ECUADOREAN MEDIA IS REMARKABLY UNFETTERED IN A COUNTRY RULED BY A MILITARY GOVERNMENT. WHILE THE GOE HAS WAYS OF BRINGING PRESSURE TO CONTROL NEW CONTENT, IT RARELY DOES SO UNLESS IT SEES ITS OWN STABILITY THREATENED. AT THE SAME TIME THE ECUADOREAN MEDIA IS RELATIVELY UNSOPHISTICATED, UNABLE TO PROBE MOST SUBJECTS BEYOND THE MOST OBVIOUS, AND LIMITED IN ITS ABILITY TO INTERPRET AND ANALYZE. NOR IS THERE A BROAD SPECTRUM OF OPINION; LEFTIST PERIODICALS COUNT THEIR READERS IN THE HUNDREDS. DIVERSE VIEWPOINTS MUST SOMETIMES FIND THEIR WAY INTO PUBLIC PRINT VIA PAID ADVERTISEMENTS, NOT THROUGH ANY OFFICIAL RETICENCE BUT BECAUSE OF THE CONSERVATIVE MANAGEMENT OF THE MEDIA.

2. YET THE MEDIA IS A POWERFUL INSTITUTION IN ECUADOR. TELEVISION COVERS MORE OF THE COUNTRY WITH EXPANDING TRANSMISSION SYSTEMS AND NEW STATIONS; NEWSPAPERS WILL OCCASIONALLY TAKE AN EDITORIAL STANCE IN OPPOSITION TO A PARTICULAR GOVERNMENT POLICY OR PROGRAM, OR CALL ATTENTION TO ITS
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SHORTCOMINGS; COLUMNISTS AND COMMENTATORS CAN DELIVER BITING CRITICISM THAT FREQUENTLY DRAWS THE ATTENTION, AND SOMETIMES THE IRE, OF THE GOE AND OTHERS. THE PRESS PLAYED A MAJOR ROLE IN THE FALL OF FORMER DICTATOR RODRIGUEZ LARA.

3. THE MAJOR MEDIA ORGANS ARE NOT RADICAL OR BASICALLY UNFRIENDLY TOWARD THE UNITED STATES. ADDITIONALLY, THE

EXISTENCE OF A GENTLEMANLY CODE OF HONOR WOULD FURTHER DIMINISH THE POSSIBILITIES OF MRS. CARTER BEING TREATED ROUGHLY BY THE MEDIA. ON THE OTHER HAND, THERE ARE A NUMBER OF ISSUES ON WHICH THE MEDIA HAS CRITICIZED THE U.S. OR IS OTHERWISE SENSITIVE:

A. EXCLUSION OF ECUADOR AND VENEZUELA FROM THE U.S. GENERALIZED SYSTEM OF TARIFF PREFERENCES (GSP). SINCE THE PASSAGE OF THIS PROVISION OF THE TRADE ACT MORE THAN TWO YEARS AGO, THIS HAS BEEN A BASIC SORE POINT, RAISED ON A CONTINUING BASIS IN THE MEDIA. ADMINISTRATION AND CONGRESSIONAL EFFORTS TO REMOVE EXCLUSION HAVE BOLSTERED HOPES TEMPORARILY IN PAST, BUT SUBSEQUENT FAILURE ONLY MAKES SITUATION WORSE.

B. USG VETO OF THE SALE OF KFIR FIGHTERS TO ECUADOR. IN VIEW OF ECUADOREANS' DEEP FEARS OF PERU, THIS IS GENERALLY INTERPRETED EITHER AS INDIFFERENCE BY THE U.S. TOWARD ECUADOR'S LEGITIMATE SECURITY INTERESTS OR PATERNALISM.

C. ECUADOR'S LONG-STANDING ASSERTION OF COMPLETE SOVEREIGNTY OVER A 200-MILE TERRITORIAL SEA IS LOOKED UPON AS BEING VINDICATED BY RECENT TRENDS IN THE WORLD TOWARD A 200-MILE RESOURCE ZONE, AND IS A SOURCE OF GREAT PRIDE IN MEDIA. HOWEVER, THE U.S.' CONTINUING INSISTENCE THAT TURNA SHOULD BE EXCLUDED FROM 200-MILE JURISDICTION (AS IT IS IN THE U.S. LAW) AND REGULATED BY A SPECIAL INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENT IS LOOKED UPON AS SELF-SERVING.
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D. THERE IS BASIC SUPPORT FOR U.S. INITIATIVES IN HUMAN RIGHTS, ALTHOUGH SOME CONCERN HAS BEEN VOICED OVER THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE U.S. IMPLEMENTATION OF ITS HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY IS INTERVENTIONISM.

4. ANY REMARKS BY MRS. CARTER TOUCHING ON THE RETURN TO CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT WILL BE GIVEN MAJOR (AND FAVORABLE) TREATMENT IN THE MEDIA.
BLOOMFIELD

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Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
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Disposition History: n/a
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